AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added by way of the present amendments. All claims currently pending and under consideration in the present application are shown below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A computer system for conditioning clinically related billing items, having a plurality of computer software components embodied ~~thereon~~ on a computing device, the computer system ~~software components~~ comprising:

a conditioning engine executable by the computing device, the conditioning engine configured for receiving a preliminary billing item associated with a clinical event, analyzing, as a condition precedent to transmitting the billing item to a paying party, the preliminary billing item by comparison against a compliance template to determine compliance therewith;

the preliminary billing item, temporarily stored on memory accessible by the computing device, ~~generated from~~ that includes billable items extracted from the clinical event, wherein the billable items comprise insurance coverage data and information supporting the billing of services or materials; and

the compliance template, temporarily stored on memory accessible by the computing device, that includes criteria configured based on the preliminary billing item and at least one regulatory guideline and comprises data fields, which correspond to each of the criteria, respectively, that record information that

satisfies the criteria, wherein the criteria, when satisfied, qualify the preliminary billing item under the at least one regulatory guideline,

wherein the conditioning engine is further configured for <u>automatically</u> determining whether the preliminary billing item complies with the at least one regulatory guideline, ~~and~~ upon determining that the <u>preliminary</u> billing item complies, dismissing restrictions from elements in the system that prevent the system from configuring the conditioning engine to transmit the preliminary billing item to the paying party <u>and upon determining that the preliminary billing item is insufficient to satisfy the at least one regulatory guideline, automatically searching within a clinical data store to verify the existence of computerized data that supports the preliminary billing item</u>.

2.   (Canceled).

3.   (Canceled).

4.   (Currently Amended) The computer system according to claim 34, wherein ~~the conditioning engine is further configured to verify~~ <u>verifying</u> the existence of the supporting ~~documentation~~ <u>computerized data comprises</u> ~~by the steps comprising~~:

automatically scanning ancillary clinical data stores for the supporting ~~documentation~~ <u>computerized data</u>; and

utilizing the supporting ~~documentation~~ <u>computerized data</u> to satisfy the criteria of the compliance template that is unsatisfied by the preliminary billing item, wherein satisfying the unsatisfied criteria of the compliance template

comprises determining that evidentiary support for the supporting ~~documentation~~ computerized data exists within the ancillary clinical data stores.

5.   (Canceled).

6.   (Previously Presented) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the conditioning engine is further configured to ascertain that the preliminary billing item does not incorporate records sufficient to satisfy each of the criteria included in the compliance template, to generate an exception that represents the preliminary billing item, and to communicate the exception to a holds queue for processing.

7.   (Currently Amended) The computer system according to claim 6, wherein the records incorporated within the preliminary billing item are supplemented for satisfaction of the unsatisfied criteria of the compliance, while in the holds queue, upon the conditioning engine automatically retrieving the supporting ~~documentation~~ computerized data that is absent from the preliminary billing item from additional data stores.

8.   (Canceled).

9.   (Previously Presented) The computer system according to claim 7, wherein automatically retrieving comprises automatically conveying a notification to a user to conduct a manual search for additional clinical documentation that is absent from the preliminary billing item.

10.   (Previously Presented) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one regulatory guideline is stored in a compliance database.

11.   (Previously Presented) The computer system according to claim 10, wherein the compliance database is updateable.

12.   (Currently Amended) A method performed by a computing device for conditioning clinically related billing items, comprising:

receiving a preliminary billing item associated with a clinical event, wherein the preliminary billing item is generated from billable items extracted from the clinical event;

utilizing the computing device to analyze analyzing, as a condition precedent to transmitting the preliminary billing item to a paying party, the preliminary billing item by comparison against at least one regulatory guideline to determine compliance therewith;

utilizing the computing device to determine determining that the preliminary billing item complies with the at least one regulatory guideline upon performing a compliance process, wherein the compliance process comprises:

(a) interrogating a compliance template temporarily stored on memory accessible by the computing device, wherein the compliance template includes criteria configured based on the preliminary billing item and at least one regulatory guideline and includes data fields, which correspond to each of the criteria, respectively, that record information that satisfies the criteria, wherein the criteria, when satisfied, qualify the preliminary billing item under the at least one regulatory guideline;

(b) determining that some of the criteria remains unsatisfied upon comparison of the compliance template to the preliminary billing item; and

(c) upon determining that some of the criteria remains unsatisfied, satisfying the unsatisfied criteria by verifying the existence of affirming data elements that support the preliminary billing item, wherein the affirming data elements provide a record of services delivered with respect to the clinical event in the form of supporting ~~documentation~~ computerized data, which is absent from the preliminary billing item, wherein verifying comprises automatically scanning ancillary clinical data stores for the supporting ~~documentation~~ computerized data and utilizing the supporting ~~documentation~~ computerized data to satisfy the criteria of the compliance template that is unsatisfied by the preliminary billing item; upon determining that the preliminary billing item complies with the at least one regulatory guideline, utilizing the computing device to generate ~~generating~~ a verified billing item from the compliant preliminary billing item, wherein the verified billing item includes annotations to the supporting ~~documentation~~ computerized data utilized to satisfy the unsatisfied criteria of the compliance template; and

transmitting the verified billing item to the paying party.

13. - 14.   (Canceled).

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 35, further comprising verifying the existence of the affirming data elements by checking evidentiary support for the affirming data elements against a compliance template.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 15, wherein the evidentiary support comprises at least clinical documentation, the clinical documentation comprising at least one of a patient chart, physicians order, diagnostic codes, a history and physical record, a mediation administration record, a set of progress notes, a treatment plan and a radiology report.

17. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12, further comprising a step of communicating an exception that represents the preliminary billing item ~~or~~ to a holds queue when the preliminary billing item is determined not to comply with the at least one regulatory guideline.

18. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 17, further comprising a step of automatically reviewing the exception for satisfaction of the at least one regulatory guideline while in the holds queue.

19. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 18, wherein the step of automatically reviewing comprises performing an automated search for additional clinical documentation.

20. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 18, wherein the step of automatically reviewing comprises performing an at least partly manual search for additional clinical documentation when the step of performing an automated search for additional clinical documentation does not resolve compliance.

21.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12, wherein the at least one regulatory guideline is stored in a compliance database.

22.   (Original) A method according to clam 21, wherein the compliance database is updateable.

23.   (Currently Amended) One or more tangible computer-readable storage media having computer-executable instructions embodied thereon that, when executed, perform a method for conditioning a clinically related billing item, the method comprising:

receiving a preliminary billing item associated with a clinical event;

analyzing, as a condition precedent to transmitting the billing item to a paying party, the preliminary billing item by comparison against at least one regulatory guideline to determine compliance therewith, wherein comparing the preliminary billing item against the at least one regulatory guideline includes comparing the preliminary billing item against a compliance template, wherein the compliance template includes criteria configured based on the preliminary billing item and the at least one regulatory guideline and includes data fields, which correspond to each of the criteria, respectively, that record information that satisfies the criteria, wherein the criteria, when satisfied, qualify the preliminary billing item under the at least one regulatory;

when the criteria of the compliance template are satisfied by the preliminary billing item, automatically searching within a clinical data store to verify the existence of computerized data that supports the preliminary billing item;

determining that the preliminary billing item complies with the at last one regulatory guideline incident to ascertaining that each of the criteria of the compliance template are satisfied by the preliminary billing item; and

transmitting the compliant preliminary billing item to the paying party.

24. – 25.   (Canceled).

26.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 36, further comprising verifying the existence of the affirming data elements by checking evidentiary support for the affirming data elements against the compliance template.

27.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 26, wherein the evidentiary support comprises at least clinical documentation, the clinical documentation comprising at least one of a patient chart, physicians order, diagnostic codes, a history and physical record, a medication administration record, a set of progress notes, a treatment plan and a radiology report.

28.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the method further comprises a step of communicating an exception that represents the preliminary billing item to a holds queue when the preliminary billing item is determined not to comply with the at least one regulatory guideline.

29.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 28, wherein the method further comprises a step of reviewing the preliminary billing item for satisfaction of the criteria of the compliance template while the exception remains in the holds queue.

30.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 29, wherein the step of reviewing comprises performing an automated search for additional clinical documentation absent from the preliminary billing item.

31.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 29, wherein the step of reviewing comprises performing an at least partly manual search for additional clinical documentation absent from the preliminary billing item.

32.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the at least one regulatory guideline is stored in a compliance database.

33.   (Currently Amended) The one or more <u>tangible</u> computer-readable storage media according to claim 32, wherein the compliance database is updateable.

34.   (Currently Amended) The computer system according to claim 1, ~~wherein the computer software components further comprise~~ <u>further comprising</u> affirming data elements that provide a record of services delivered with respect to the clinical event in the form of supporting ~~documentation~~ <u>computerized data</u>, which is absent from the preliminary billing item.

35.   (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12, wherein the at least one regulatory guideline includes the affirming data elements.

36.   (Currently Amended) The one or more tangible computer-readable storage media according to claim 23, wherein the at least one regulatory guideline includes the affirming data elements.

37.   (Previously Presented) The computer system according to claim 1, further comprising a billing capture engine to generate the preliminary billing item, wherein generating comprises extracting the billable items from a clinical data store.

38.   (Currently Amended) The computer system according to claim 1, wherein determining whether the preliminary billing item complies with the at least one regulatory guideline comprises comparing the preliminary billing item against the compliance template, wherein the compliance template comprising necessary comprises the criteria necessary for qualifying the preliminary billing item under the at least one regulatory guideline.